

CORLEY et al.

Serial No.: 09/647,711

Request for Reconsideration dated November 24, 2003

Response to Office Action dated August 26, 2003

### **REMARKS**

Claims 11-20 are pending. Favorable reconsideration of the application in view of the remarks set forth herein is respectfully requested.

Without acquiescing in the rejections or any of the characterizations set forth in the Office Action, it is respectfully submitted that the reference to Black et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,285,998 B1, hereinafter "Black") does not qualify as prior art against the claims of the instant application.

In particular, the face of Black indicates that Black has an earliest U.S. filing date of February 23, 1999. The instant application is entitled to a priority date of April 27, 1998, based on GB 9808988.1. Therefore, any U.S. patent having, as its earliest filing date, a date later than April 27, 1998 (e.g., Black) does not qualify as prior art. Accordingly, any rejection based in whole or in part on Black is improper.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over Black, and the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Black in view of Johnson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,081,798) are improper. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Favorable reconsideration of the application and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

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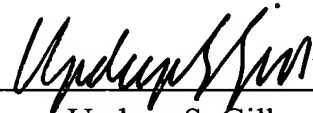
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Should the Examiner deem that further issues require resolution prior to allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney of record at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

**NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.**

By: \_\_\_\_\_



Updeep S. Gill

Reg. No. 37,334

USG:jls

1100 North Glebe Road, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor

Arlington, VA 22201-4714

Telephone: (703) 816-4000

Facsimile: (703) 816-4100